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Evening, at the home of Dr. Roberts ...































BUT LISTEN TO ME! TRY TO UN-DERSTANO! THAT GIRL IS HYSTERICAL WITH FEAR...SHE ASKING FOR HELP!

































TIM YOUR
PRISONER, MR. WYNAME! SAW ME IN YOUR
WILTURE! BUT
WHY... WHY...
NO DOUBT!





































THEY'RE ALREADY HERE! THEN THEY CAN TAKE
THE NOISE OF THE FIGHT
MUST HAVE BROUGHT
THEM!

SOMEBOOY UNTIE
MISS TROMM,
WHILE I.

Once slone, the Doll Man's will power exerts itself...



























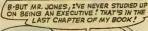


































Blimpy landed the job... and President Charlie Jones landed a fish! Then, next moning...





GOLLY! IT'S JONES!
WIFE, ALL RIGHT!
I'M PROBABLY
SUPPOSED TO CUT
HER ALLOWANCE,
TOO, IN
ECONOMIZING!































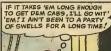
























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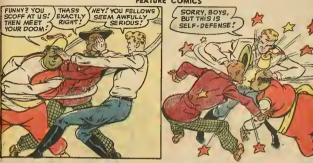




















































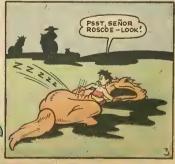




































Mountain Mystery

"SINGLE with bath. Don't know how long I'll ." Darrel Dane, standing at the reservation desk of the big mountain lodge, broke off his sentence to stare at the feminine figure coming through the entrance.

"Hi, Darrel." The girl smiled at him mischievously. "Thought I might find you here."

"Martha!" Darrel exclaimed. "Martha Roberts! What are you doing here?" Then, suddenly conscious of the listening ears of the room clerk, Darrel pulled himself together. "Swell to see you," he said more naturally, "but I thought you were hundreds of miles away."

Quickly the two completed their arrangements for rooms. Afterward Darrel took Martha by the elbow and led her outside. "The view from this end should be spectacular," he said for the benefit of possible listeners, drawing Martha down the wide porch to a secluded corner. Then he swung her around to face him.

"All right, what goes on?" he demanded.
"How did you know where to find me? If
anyone else knows where I am, it'll ruin the
whole scheme!"

"Don't worry," Martha reassured him. "I figured out your destination just the way you must have done, and I kept it to myself. I knew you were on the trail of Arch Spencer, the swindler and murderer. Writing up a feature on the Spencer case for my paper, I came across information that in his early days he was a guide here in the mountains. The police can't find a trace of him, but it seemed to me that a man who knew of this remote lodge, and who knew that during this off-season it would be empty of guests, might well pick it as a hideout! I tried to find you but you had disappeared—so I decided to work on my hunch and here I am."

"You're a smart deducer," Darrel said, "but I'm not so sure it was a good thing for you to come here yourself. Spencer is sure to look things over first. And if he finds anything fishy, he may not stick around for a showdown."

"That's one reason I came. You and your fiancee, all wrapped up in each other and the mountains, should be less conspicuous than you alone!"

Darrel smiled at her. "For once, Martha, I believe you're right! Now let's get into some hiking clothes and start putting on a good impersonation of two enthusiastic mountaineers. We'll give our friend Spencer a week to show up."

For the next few days, Darrel and Martha did just that. They explored the trails and admired the magnificent views, enjoying the time as an unexpected holiday. In this early winter season the big lodge was virtually empty, attracting neither the hikers of mid-summer nor the skiers of mid-winter. Nor, in the space of six days, did the one expected guest show up. Was their hunch all wrong?

On their last day of the week, Darrel decided they'd better return the next day to civilization. Then, in casual conversation with the manager, he learned of a small cabin high in the mountains, sometimes used by overnight hikers. Not wanting to pass up a single possibility, he decided to explore it. The trail up was a tough climb, he was told, and Martha, tired from a ramble the day before, begged off to do her packing. So Darrel decided to make the hike alone.

The first part of the trail, winding through a pine forest, was easy. Then it began to climb steeply, first through stunted forest and then out above the timber line onto rocky terrain. It passed across narrow rock ledges with sheer drops of hundreds of feet yawning beneath—dangerous only if one were subject to dizzy spells, or were careless of one's footing, Finally Darrel approached the summit of the mouns, tain, from which the views were so breathtaking that he almost forgot his purpose. He was recalled to it when he spotted a tiny cabin situated in a small declivity.

Approaching cautiously, Darrel could detect no sign of life. There was so little cover here on the summit that he held his breath as he circled nearer. He would make a good target for watchful eyes inside. But his approach was not challenged, and when he pushed open the door he found no occupant nor any sign that the place had been recently used. There was little to look at-an old woodburning stove, a couple of bunks, a tipsy table and benches, and some cupboards along one wall. Opening the cupboards, Darrel whistled. Instead of finding them empty as he had expected, he saw that the shelves were filled with nonperishable supplies. Row after row of canned goods . . . enough food to feed a man for months.

Hastily Darrel left the cabin and started downward. His hunch was strengthened. It looked as if someone had carefully prepared the cabin for a hideout. A man could hole in there for the winter, sure that he would remain undiscovered. And in the spring, with the hue and cry of a search for him forgotten, he could change his identity and go his own way.

Toward the bottom of the trail, Darrel took a little cutoff—steeper than the usual route, but quicker to use in reaching the lodge. Arriving at the lodge, he scanned the big porch, but no Martha. Inside, he knocked at her door, but there was no response. Finally he sought the clerk.

"Miss Roberts?" the clerk said. "Yes, I believe I saw her starting out just a short time ago with the other guest."

"Other guest?" Darrel inquired, puzzled.

"Oh, yes," the clerk explained. "I forgothe arrived after you left today. A Mr. Arthur Spurr-perhaps you know him?"

Arthur Spurr... Archer Spencer! Darrel's brain whirled. It was more than a possibility ... and Martha had disappeared with the man! He dashed out of the lodge. There were many trails they might have taken. His only clue was his feeling that the man, if it was Spencer, would make for the cabin. And they might have passed by on the trail while Darrel was taking the cutoff.

Tired as he was, he climbed rapidly after them. They couldn't be far ahead! But he reached the first of the rocky ledges without spotting anyone.

"Darrel! Look out!" Martha's scream came from above. The trail climbed and switched back above him, and looking up, he saw Martha struggling with a man. At the same instant the man freed himself and rolled a heavy boulder off the trail. It crashed downward, straight for Darrel. On the narrow ledge there was no place to avoid it. In a matter of seconds, Darrell decided his plan of action. A few feet down from the side of the trail grew a small pine tree. It was not strong enough to hold the weight of a man . . . but Darrel, even as he dived for the tree, changed his form. Calling upon his unique powers, he became the Doll Man, that mightiest of midgets!

In his small, doll-like form, he clung gratefully to the branches that saved him from certain death. Pulling himself up slightly he could see the figures aboye him. The man was laughing.

"That disposes of your companion!" he chuckled to the sobbing Martha. "You're next, my dear ... and then a regrettable mountaineering accident will have disposed of the only two people who knew where to look for Archer Spencer!"

Even as Spencer spoke, the Doll Man was moving. The cliff above would have offered no access to a normal-sized man. To the Doll Man, a tiny crack served as an excellent chimney. Wriggling upward, he found tiny footholds and handholds. Reaching the top, the element of surprise was complete. Spencer, believing Darrel Dane dead, was completely unprepared for the blow that knocked him out.

Resuming his normal form, Darrel removed the guns from Spencer's inert form. It was with the man's own guns that Darrel and Martha later, having revived him, shepherded the murderer back down the trail, and thus brought another criminal to justice.

Later, when Darrel Dane asked Martha why she had risked her life to go with a hunted murderer, she said, simply, "A good reporter never passes up the chance for an exclusive story."

To which Darrel replied, "Next time, darling, please don't try to be that exclusive. Just take your chances with me."



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